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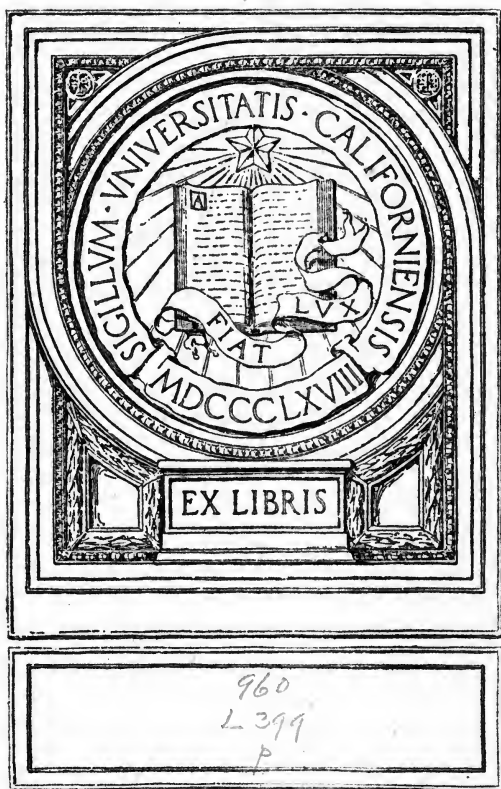


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Puppets of Fate

Alice C. Labelle



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American Dramatists Series

PUPPETS OF FATE

*a drama in four acts
and a prologue by*

ALICE ELIZABETH LAVELLE



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Dedicated to those
friends who ever spoke
loving and encouraging
words to and of—

THE AUTHOR

PREFACE

The following historical drama has no incident in it that I have not found suggested or recorded by one authority or another. When I found writers that differed I took the better corroborated story or that which seemed to me more likely to be authentic. As has been well said, "If you would have the story of Napoleon, you must take it from the lips of Frenchmen." I have followed this suggestion and read many French authorities before beginning to write, and it is because I have taken the word of Frenchmen in regard to their hero that I paint the picture of Josephine to be found in this book. I want to acknowledge the kindness of Professor Henry Le Daum, Professor of French and Spanish in the University of North Dakota, for his encouragement and directness in suggesting to me that I give the true French version of Josephine's character and the philosophy of Napoleon as applied to his treatment of the deposed Empress of the French. I am much indebted to this gentleman also for the use of many valuable books, without which I should have been unable to get such an intimate knowledge of the subject on which I undertook to write.

A. E. L.

PROLOGUE

*Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Interior,
1797.*

ACT I

SCENE I

*Josephine's Drawing-room, rue Chatereine, 1797,
four weeks after her marriage to Napoleon Bona-
parte who has just been made Commander-in-Chief
of the Army of Italy.*

SCENE 2

*Tent scene near Piedmont, Italy, four weeks
after Napoleon's marriage to Josephine. Time is
identical with that of scene 1.*

ACT II

SCENE I

*Tent scene in Cairo, Africa, 1789, fourteen
months after Napoleon's marriage to Josephine.*

SCENE 2

*Scene in Josephine's drawing-room, 1798, seven-
teen months after her marriage and immediately
after his return from Africa to Paris.*

ACT III

Room in palace at Mantua, Italy, 1807.

ACT IV

SCENE I

Room in Fontainebleau, 1809.

SCENE 2

Room in Fontainebleau, one day later.

ACT V

Josephine's boudoir at Malmaison in May 1814.

CHARACTERS

NAPOLEON, *afterward Emperor of France.*

EUGENE, *son of Josephine by her first husband, Viscount de Beauharnais.*

LUCIEN, *brother of Napoleon.*

LOUIS, *brother of Napoleon and husband of Hortense, step-daughter to Napoleon, who made this couple King and Queen of Holland and adopted their son, Napoleon, and made him heir to the French throne. The child died, however.*

GEN. MURAT, *afterward married to Napoleon's sister, Caroline.*

BARRAS, *Head of the Directory at Paris when the play opens.*

JUNOT, *Aide-de-camp to Napoleon.*

BOURRIENNE, *Secretary to Napoleon.*

DUROC, *valued personal friend of Napoleon; killed in battle.*

ARNAULT, *the Poet.*

REGNAULT DE ST. JEAN D'ANGÉLY.

ALEXANDER OF RUSSIA, *one of the kings who combined to defeat Napoleon.*

MARMONT.

LAVALETTE, *afterward made a count by Napoleon.*

DOCTOR CORVISART, *Court Physician.*

GRÉTRY, *the Composer.*

FOUCHÉ, *Minister of Police.*

LOUISA, *confidante of Josephine in the earlier years of her life.*

MME. MURAT, *Napoleon's sister Caroline.*

STEPHANIE DE BEAUHARNAIS, *relative of Josephine and adopted by Napoleon.*

HORTENSE, *daughter of Josephine by her first husband. She married Louis and became Queen of Holland.*

JOSEPHINE, *a widow, who married Napoleon and became Empress of France.*

Valets, couriers, lackeys, pages and ladies-in-waiting.

PUPPETS OF FATE

PROLOGUE

SCENE—*Inner office of Gen. Napoleon Bonaparte, Commander-in-Chief of the Interior, 1797. Door R. in flat. Banner "Vive la Republique" with large maps of Europe or European countries on wall; fire-place with conventional mantle-piece; stack of confiscated arms; desk with ink bottle, papers, books, quills, etc.; common table with chairs, R., book-case, etc. Discover Lavalette seated at desk writing.*

Enter an Orderly with letters and papers.

ORDERLY (*handing papers to Lavalette*) Good morning, M. Lavalette.

LAVALETTE (*scrutinizing letters closely and indicating red one—a large square envelope*) Where did this—Good morning, Ormonde—Where did this red envelope come from?

ORDERLY. Don't know, sir.

[*Orderly starts out but meets a boy at the door who bumps into him, upsetting the dignity of the orderly greatly.*]

BOY (*breathlessly*) Is this the office of Gen. Bonaparte?

ORDERLY. Yes! but unless you are some relative, you are in the wrong place, young man! This is his private office!

BOY (*seeing Lavalette whom he mistakes for Bonaparte*) Oh! (*Rushes over to desk where Lavalette continues to write. Boy catches. Lavalette looks up quickly and then continues to write obviously indifferent to the presence of the boy, who then catches again. Lavalette now coughs dangerously.*)

LAVALETTE (*sternly*) Well, boy, what is it?

BOY. Gen. Bonaparte, I am the son—

LAVALETTE (*with dignity*) I am not Gen. Bonaparte.

BOY (*more confidently*) Oh! Where is Gen. Bonaparte then? Isn't this the office of the Commander of the Interior? The Orderly said—

LAVALETTE. Yes, it is, but the Commander of the Interior has something to do besides interviewing boys. In fact, I am right here to keep fools and boys at a distance!

BOY. Well I may be a boy but I am no fool and I am going to see him, that's all! I'm Gen. Beauharnais' son and I must see Gen. Bonaparte.

LAVALETTE (*Writing*) You might as well get out first as last. He is busy. He has an appointment with M. Barras of the Directory at this time.

[*Enter Napoleon who stands just inside the door taking in quietly all that is passing.*]

BOY. But I tell you I must and will see him. I want my father's sword back! My father was the commander of the French Army once.

LAVALETTE. I tell you you cannot see him, boy! Your demand would appear ridiculous in his eyes. What does he care for your father?

BOY. But my father was a commander as he is and I am the son of a soldier and my father and

mother always told me to keep that sword and only use it for the cause of right and justice, for the honor of—

NAPOLEON (*advancing*) Lavalette, who is this boy? (*to the boy*) What is it?

LAVALETTE (*taking boy by the arm*) I'll show him out.—

BOY. But I won't go out until I get it! I told my mother I would not and I won't!

NAPOLEON (*to Lavalette*) Wait! Force is very well when one can use nothing else, but when one is master, justice is better. My boy, what is it? Who has wronged you that you are so excited? I'll attend to your case just as soon as I see if there is anything of importance in the morning's mail. (*Picks up red envelope and looks at it curiously; then opens it and reads aloud, "You shall be King."*) Strange! Where did this come from, Lavalette?

LAVALETTE. I don't know; I cannot find out where it came from.

NAPOLEON. Now, what is it, my boy?

BOY. Are you Commander-in-Chief of the Interior?

NAPOLEON. I am.

BOY. Well, you sent an officer to my house and he took away my father's sword on your orders, he said, and I want it back. My father was Gen. Beauharnais, and his last words almost were to give that very sword to his son—to me—and I want it! I love my country just as much as you do, and so does my mother, and that sword will never be used by me but for the purpose of getting for my mother her rights or the rights of my father's land, and

I want it back!

NAPOLEON. (*Patting him on the shoulder*)
And you shall have it back! That sword, Lavalette!

Exit Lavalette.

NAPOLEON. Your mother is the Vicountess de Beauharnais, who so narrowly escaped the guillotine herself? I would like to know her. She has a son who is not afraid to make himself heard, and that speaks well for the mother's judgment and character.

Re-enter Lavalette who hands sword to Napoleon.

NAPOLEON. My son, take your father's sword to your mother with the compliments of Gen. Bonaparte.

BOY. (*Showing himself to be much affected as he kisses the sword*) Thank you greatly, sir. My mother is waiting for me in the carriage; she will probably come in and thank you herself, personally.

Exit the boy.

NAPOLEON. Oh! O—Yes; I would be pleased to receive her. Lavalette, somebody just called you into the outer office!

LAVALETTE (*surprised*) What's that, General? Oh! Oh, yes!

Exit Lavalette.

[*Napoleon seats himself pompously at desk, arranging himself to appear imposingly.*]

Enter Josephine.

JOSEPHINE. Gen. Bonaparte. (*No answer*) Gen. Bonaparte! (*When he looks up at her*) I am the mother of the boy whom you have just made so happy. May I thank you personally for your great kindness? (*No answer*) to the widow and

son of Beauharnais?

NAPOLEON. (*Having risen accepts her hand*) I am glad to be of service to you. (*Awkwardly*) It was at the time of the general order for disarmament of the sections and my officers were simply complying with the letter of the law in visiting the private homes and confiscating the arms therein. (*Pauses awkwardly*) I was much affected by the frankness and fervor your boy displayed and, believe me, madame, I hesitated not a moment to grant his request.

JOSEPHINE. Oh, sir, your generosity fills Paris with contentment. Indeed, for your protection of the Convention, you are regarded as the Saviour of the country by some.

NAPOLEON. By many as a demon who has deluged the capital with blood, I fear.

JOSEPHINE. Oh, I admit it seems to me that it is only with regret that we should think of the consternation you have spread throughout the capital. To me, a Royalist, it is a frightful service you have performed.

NAPOLEON. It is very possibly so; the military are only automata to which the government gives such motions as it pleases. They have no duty but to obey. Besides, I wished to teach the Parisians a little lesson. This is simply my seal which I have set upon France!

JOSEPHINE. Oh, indeed!

NAPOLEON. These light skirmishes are but the coruscations of my glory.

JOSEPHINE. If you are to acquire glory at such a price, I would rather count you among the victims!

NAPOLEON. (*Surprised*) Indeed!

JOSEPHINE. My husband, remember, was guillotined!

NAPOLEON. Yes; I remember. I regret it, Madame.

Enter Barras.

NAPOLEON. Good day, M. Barras.

BARRAS. Good day—(*with great surprise*)
Mme. Beauharnais! This is a surprise!

JOSEPHINE (*embarrassed*) Yes—yes—I came with Eugene to recover the sword of my dead husband.

BARRAS. Oh, I see! (*Maliciously*) But where is the boy?

JOSEPHINE. In the carriage—outside—he waits for me!

NAPOLEON. I see you are friends of old standing, M. Barras?

BARRAS. Oh, we are more than friends. Mme. Tallien and Mme. de Beauharnais are the two chief ornaments of my seraglio; in fact, Mme. Tallien is the ex-sultana!

NAPOLEON. (*shocked*) What!

BARRAS. Yes—

JOSEPHINE. Oh, pray! Barras! What—!

BARRAS (*impudently and enjoying the consternation of the others*) Don't take me too seriously, Bonaparte! I will call again. I fear I have interrupted a mutually agreeable tete-a-tete.

JOSEPHINE. Not at all—

Exit Barras.

NAPOLEON. That was hardly the way to speak to a lady—a lady of the old regime.

JOSEPHINE. Gen. Bonaparte, I trust you will

believe me, his words were stronger than his meaning.

NAPOLEON. His words were offensive and impertinent to a lady of the—

JOSEPHINE. His jests are coarse as the grain of his nature. Of course, you know Mme. Tallien was my greatest benefactor during the Revolution. Through her, Barras restored much of my property through his influence with the Directory, and hence, for my two children's sake, I am grateful to him, and frequently—very frequently—do I assist Mme. Tallien at Barras' home.

NAPOLEON. I see! I see!

JOSEPHINE. The man's jests are barbarously chosen!

NAPOLEON. Yes, he smacks of the barracks more than I, but Barras is at the head of the Directory, Madame, and at present I am looking for an appointment to the command of the Army of Italy. Just now I need his help and YOURS if you have the influence you say, through Mme. Tallien. I have need of his influence to arrive at the power I seek, but (*impressively*) the time will yet come when they will all be but too happy should I grant them mine. My sword is by my side and with it I shall go far.

JOSEPHINE. I would consider it a great honor if I may be able to serve you in the way you suggest.

NAPOLEON. You could help me, Madame.

JOSEPHINE. And I will do so if you will be more explicit. (*Gracefully*) You are incomparably the most fascinating man I have ever met.

NAPOLEON. Ah, Madame, I thank you, but—may I call and explain further?

JOSEPHINE. When shall I be honored?

NAPOLÉON. You are gracious. Tomorrow at four. (*Bowing her out through door*) Adieu. (*Stands by door in deep meditation*) THAT woman has prestige. She has what I most lack—royalist friends and connections on every hand. Isolated, with no fortune save that which my sword carves out for me, with military rank and talents, I lack only a gracious, diplomatic woman of the old school. (*Goes over to desk; sits*) She has herself given me the key to the situation, and Barras has promised to assist me to negotiate some such marriage for myself! Now is the time! Through her and Mme. Tallien, Barras, to be rid of my growing power in Paris, will nominate me Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Italy, and Josephine will be the star of my destiny! (*Rising*) The English poet has said: "The flighty purpose never is o'ertook unless the deed go with it." I will go at once to—BARRAS!

[*Enter Barras who stands in door as his name is spoken.*]

BARRAS. (*Bowing profoundly*) At your service!

CURTAIN

ACT I

SCENE I

SCENE—*Josephine's sitting room in rue Chateraine, Paris. Large center door with potted palms or ferns at either side; stair-case L. with landing four or five steps up; lady's writing desk R. of door; fire-place R.; small table with chairs R. toward front; wooden but gracefully carved settle L. Discover Josephine sitting at writing desk with back toward audience; she is opening her mail and reading letters. Louise, embroidering as she sits on settle. Josephine rises and comes down to sit at table with back toward fire-place. She lays letters on table.*

JOSEPHINE. (*musings aloud as she reads letters*)
I wonder whether this extraordinary self-confidence which Bonaparte manifests in his most insignificant words might not merely be the result of a young man's presumption, which might easily be destined to bitter disappointment.

LOUISE. I don't think so.

JOSEPHINE. Strange that this clever, young military officer should have been attracted to me—

LOUISE. Yes—with HIS piercing eyes!

JOSEPHINE. More than six years older than he!

LOUISE. I should say so!

JOSEPHINE. Sometimes I wonder whether the man with whose fate mine is now bound is a mad-man or a genuine hero!

LOUISE. I think he's both!

JOSEPHINE. (*louder*) Was I wise to marry a friend of young Robespierre—to marry a Republican general?

LOUISE. You WERE wise; what had you to lose? Nothing. To gain? Well, at least, he HONORED you, which is more than—

JOSEPHINE. Yes, Louise, but I must say I tremble before the violence of Bonaparte's love. You have no idea—our honeymoon lasted only two days—

LOUISE. Enough, from what you say!

JOSEPHINE. Yes, and now he summons me to Italy to camp—I, who love the very gutters of Paris! To leave all my friends and go to Italy to camp with only HIM for diversion!

LOUISE. The bomb shells will furnish you diversion enough, judging from the reports!

JOSEPHINE. (*reading one of the letters*) Listen! "Hasten, for I warn you that if you linger, you will find me ill; fatigue and your absence combined are more than I can bear." Here's another. I do believe he never sends a messenger to Paris to the Directory without sending, at the same time, a letter to me. (*Reads from another letter*) "You are coming, are you not, my darling? You will soon be here at my side and I can hold you in my arms, close to my heart, which beats only for you. Oh, take wings, beloved, and fly to me!" It is impossible to avoid it. I have written that I am too ill to leave Paris until that story is worn out. Now he writes that Joseph is to take me, and again, that Junot, his aide-de-camp, is on his way hither, to conduct me to Toulon, "if I am able," (*laughs lightly*) he says!

Enter Murat.

MURAT. How now! Good morning! How is my lady? (*As Josephine rises and acknowledges the greeting but points disconsolately to the letters on table*) Downcast—I need not ask! Good morning, Louise. (*taking her hand after which Louise crosses R. and sits at table; Josephine leads Murat L. and sits on settle.*)

LOUISE. Yes, Bonaparte is an unreasonable lover. (*To audience*) I wish he were mine! I'd appreciate him better.

MURAT. In love it is idle to seek for reasons. One loves because one loves, and nothing is less capable of explanation than this feeling.

JOSEPHINE. Yes; but one should not love when it inconveniences the lady!

MURAT. But I understand your husband, Madame Bonaparte. Napoleon is in love in every meaning of the word, judging from the letters you have shown me. It is, apparently, for the first time, and he feels it with all the force of his nature and character.

LOUISE. Besides, you got him his appointment to Italy from Barras yourself, Madame.

JOSEPHINE. Yes; and when I told him of his appointment and of the envy it had already caused among his fellow soldiers, he said pompously, "Think they then that I have need of their protection to arrive at power? Egregious mistake! They will one day be happy should I grant them mine! My sword is by my side and with it I shall go far!" (*Laughs playfully*) Oh, Bonaparte is so funny!

Enter the Poet Arnault.

(*Josephine and Murat rise as they find Arnault bowing before them.*)

JOSEPHINE. Good morning, Arnault.

ARNAULT. Good morning, Mme. Bonaparte. Good morning, Murat.

JOSEPHINE. Louise!

Louise (*rising and going to Josephine who hands her Arnault's hat*) Yes. (*She answers Arnault's polite bow of recognition by a cheerful "Good morning." She then carries hat R. and lays it on table.*)

MURAT (*to Arnault*) Good morning I have just brought Mme. Bonaparte another letter from her husband, but I hardly dare to present it, she is already so overcome with his importunate nature.

JOSEPHINE. (*Sitting on settle with Murat on her left, Arnault standing conveniently near*) Oh! have you another letter? Let us read it; I like to read them; it pleases my vanity, I suppose. I dare say he is still begging me to go to him.

ARNAULT. Surely he does not want you to go to—

JOSEPHINE. (*as she takes the letter and proceeds to open it*) Yes, (*piteously*) he wants me to go to Italy!

ARNAULT. But the war has scarcely begun.

LOUISE. (*Answering Arnault's look in her direction*) Her place is certainly not in Italy.

JOSEPHINE. (*Looking up from her letter*) Murat, what do you say?

MURAT. Well, Madame, it is hardly the place for a young wife in the tumult of a fight. The disorder of camp life will hardly please your delicate nature.

JOSEPHINE. (*gratefully*) I knew you would

say that! (*piteously*) But what shall I do about it? (*Brightening up*) Read that. (*Hands him the letter*) Isn't that ridiculous?

LOUISE. Suspicious? Again?

JOSEPHINE. Yes.

LOUISE. (*To audience*) He's no fool!

JOSEPHINE. Look, Murat. (*Indicates place on letter*) Read that to Arnault.

MURAT. I can't read it.

JOSEPHINE. Try.

MURAT. No, I never was good at puzzles, Madame.

[*Enter Junot who stands taking in the situation unobserved.*]

JOSEPHINE. (*Receiving back the letter, and reading*) "What are you doing? Why do you not come? If it is a lover that detains you, fear Othello's dagger." How funny Bonaparte is! Listen, Arnault and Louise. (*reads*) "When tempted to curse my fate, I lay my hand over my heart and feeling your picture there, love renders me supremely happy, and all of life seems bright, save the time which I spend away from you."

ARNAULT. (*to Louise*) She is ever playful. How could he mistrust her.

LOUISE. (*to Arnault*) Yes; how could he! (*to audience*) Arnault doesn't know her as well as I!

[*Junot coughs and comes forward. All evidently embarrassed but Josephine.*]

JOSEPHINE. Lieut. Junot! You are welcome. Let me present Gen. Murat and the Poet, Arnault. You have met Louise, I think.

JUNOT. (*Acknowledging the introductions in a*

graceful but businesslike manner) I come, Madame, to conduct you at once to your husband who awaits you at Toulon. He commands your presence under my escort. My orders are six hours in Paris; madame, in one hour I leave.

JOSEPHINE. (*Dropping her head on Murat's shoulder. He puts her away gently*) Oh, Paris! Paris! (*Looking helplessly at Junot*) And must I leave everything and everybody for—

JUNOT. (*at the door*) Madame, you must!

Exit Josephine weeping.

Murat and Arnault take leave of Louise and pass out saluting Junot gravely.

JUNOT. Tell Mme. Bonaparte, please, I will return very shortly.

LOUISE. Yes, Lieut. Junot; she will be ready.

Exit Junot.

LOUISE. (*sitting*) Isn't she the little fool! Considering her checkered career up to this time. She ought to be elated to get such adoration from a man like he! Just think! Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Italy. Only twenty-six years old and his name in every mouth—and she only laughs at him! If I were not well pensioned by her, it could never have happened. She is too shallow to get anything but amusement out of letters which to any serious woman would be a crown of glory. All she does is bewail her fate, and yet in Paris Napoleon Bonaparte is next to Barras, who cares no more for her than she for Bonaparte at this moment!

Enter Josephine.

JOSEPHINE. Oh, Louise, why are you not getting ready? Hasten. You must come to keep my

courage up.

LOUISE. No, Josephine. Everyone is calling me "the officious;" they know I am and have been your confidante, not your maid. You will do better not to let Bonaparte see the relation in which you really hold me, but do not fear; I will never betray you.

JOSEPHINE. Oh, I know that. But come. I cannot bear to be there without a friend—someone in whom I can confide my innermost feelings.

LOUISE. But you will have Napoleon.

Enter Junot unobserved.

JOSEPHINE. Oh, Napoleon! What of him! I'd rather have Junot!

JUNOT. (*advancing*) Madame, the carriage waits.

JOSEPHINE. Must I really go? Then, hurry, Louise. I cannot go without you.

LOUISE. (*wisely*) Yes; you NEED me, I see.
(*exit*)

JOSEPHINE. (*Piteously as she seats herself dejectedly at table apparently totally oblivious to Junot's presence*) Oh, Paris! Paris! And I must leave you behind when I was having so many good times and when so much seemed promised me.

Re-enter Louise, buttoning her wraps.

JUNOT. Madame, we wait. Six hours only in Paris; my orders.

Exeunt Josephine and Louise.

JUNOT. (*in center door before following*) So this is the wife of the MAN of DESTINY! (*exit*)

CURTAIN

SCENE II

SCENE—*Napoleon's tent on the battlefield near Piedmont, Italy, 1797, four weeks after marriage to Josephine. Narrow table just in front of entrance to main tent with large maps spread out, ink bottle, quills, etc. Cannon and stacked arms, French soldier pacing about regularly. Discover Napoleon sitting back of table (facing audience) with Marmont and Lavalette following him as he traces with a pin in each hand the proposed campaign.*

NAPOLEON. (*sticking pins into map*) I'll catch them here! (*Sits back with hands in pockets and studies maps*) Lavalette, I am sending you with Junot to Paris, because I think you are best fitted to act on the Royalists and to protect the families of the old regime. Gen. Augereau will act on the Republicans for me and win the confidence of the more ardent Democrats. It will not be necessary for you to communicate with him. Keep your own counsel and he will keep his. You understand.

LAVALETTE. Yes, General, when shall I start?

NAPOLEON. As soon as I receive the next courier from Paris.

Enter Courier.

NAPOLEON. Ah! At last. (*Taking letters from saluting courier*) No letters from my good Josephine? Woman's way. (*Picks out a letter*) What! You have one? Good! (*Opens letter and reads eagerly.*)

MARMONT. (*to Lavalette as they look at Napoleon narrowly*) However occupied he may be with his greatness, the interests intrusted to him,

and with his future, he nevertheless always has time to think of his wife.

NAPOLEON. (*sitting down, one hand in pocket, letter in the other*) I've wronged that woman greatly. I do not know how I shall ever expiate my fault. I reproached her for remaining in Paris when she is suffering. Marmont, a child as adorable as my Josephine will soon rest in my arms. (*Rises and walks up and down rapidly, taking out a miniature of Josephine which he studies lovingly. Looking at it, he says tenderly*) It seems to me that could I but see you once, hold you for an instant in my arms, I should be content, but, unfortunate man that I am I cannot—even for a moment. I must write to Joseph, my brother, (*turns quickly toward table and sees courier who stands waiting orders*) Oh! (*to courier*) What are people saying about us in Paris? Are they satisfied?

COURIER. (*Salutes*) They are filled with admiration for you, General.

NAPOLEON. They have not seen anything yet. There are still greater successes for us—in the future. Fortune has not smiled on us for me to despise her favors. She is a woman and the more she does for me, the more I shall demand of her. In our time, no one has devised anything really great. I must set the example. (*Taking another letter which the courier has brought and after reading it intently*) I am about to resign. Lavalette, you must take my written statement to the Directory.

LAVALETTE. Resign!

MARMONT. How! Why?

NAPOLEON. This letter informs me that henceforth the Army of Italy is to be divided into two

armies, one of which (*that of the South*) is to be confided to me. This is to set forth to conquer the southern part of the peninsula, while the other, that of the North, is to be commanded by General Kellerman. (*Calls*) Bourrienne! Bourrienne!

Enter Bourrienne R. and Napoleon indicates by a wave of his hand that he wants him to sit down at the table and write. When Bourrienne is seated, Napoleon sits on edge of table and watches the secretary now and then to see that he is getting the dictation all right. Exeunt Lavalette and Marmont L.

NAPOLÉON. Write: "I have conducted my campaign without consulting anyone. I should have failed had I been compelled to adapt myself to another's methods. I have gained some advantages over greatly superior forces, when my men were in absolute need of everything, because confiding in their trust in me, my march was as swift as my thought. (*Gets up and begins to walk rapidly about*) I feel that it takes some courage—much courage to write you this letter; (*looking vaguely into the audience with arms folded*) it exposes me to the charge of ambition and pride." (*Takes out miniature and regards it lovingly*) Address that letter to the Directory. Take this letter to Joseph. (*Dictates*) "My friend, I am in despair, for my wife, the only creature in the world whom I love, is ill, and I am oppressed with the most gloomy forebodings because of her condition. I beseech you to tell me how she is, and by the tie of blood and the tender friendship which unites us, beg that you will give her the tender care which it would be my greatest joy to give her. You cannot love her as I

do, but you are the only person on earth who can, even in a measure, take my place. You are the only man on earth for whom I have always entertained a warm and constant affection. You and my Josephine are the only beings in whom I feel any interest. Reassure me; tell me the truth. You know my ardent nature, that I have never loved before, that Josephine is the first woman I have ever truly cared for, and you can understand that her illness drives me distracted. I am alone, given over to fears and ill health; nobody writes to me and I feel deserted by all, even by you. If my wife is able to stand the journey, I desire that she should come to me for I need her. I love her to distraction and I cannot endure the separation. If she has ceased to love me, my mission on earth is finished. I leave myself in your hands, my best of friends, and beseech you to so arrange matters, that my courier will not be obliged to remain in Paris longer than six hours, to hasten his return with the news which will give me new life. (*As Napoleon dictates the last words, the glass on the miniature breaks as he raises the picture to his lips. He regards this as an ill omen*) Oh, God! My wife is either frightfully ill—or worse—UNFAITHFUL TO ME!

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE I

SCENE—*Napoleon's tent in Cairo, Africa, 1798, fourteen months after his marriage to Josephine. Comparatively speaking, the same as the tent scene near Piedmont. Discover Napoleon and Junot walking together and in intense conversation, Napoleon evidently much disturbed and angry.*

NAPOLEON. Leave me now, Junot, but send Bourrienne to me at once. I want to write to Joseph. I will have done with her!

Enter Bourrienne L.

NAPOLEON (R.) YOU are not devoted to me! (*Sits on bench outside tent*) Oh Woman! Josephine!—If you were devoted to me, you would have told me what I have just learned from Junot. He is a true friend. Josephine and I are six hundred miles apart.—Josephine—to deceive me in that way! She!—Confound them! I will wipe out the whole brood of coxcombs and popinjays!—As for her! divorce!—yes, divorce! a public divorce! a full exposure!—I must write. I know everything. You ought to have told me!

BOURRIENNE. Don't you think Junot is a trifle lacking in generosity to thus lightly accuse a woman who is absent and unable to defend herself?

NAPOLEON. (*mournfully*) Josephine, of all persons! To simulate a love she did not feel!

BOURRIENNE. Do you think Junot proves his devotion to you by adding domestic trials to the

uneasiness you already feel over the situation here at this crisis?

NAPOLEON. Divorce! Separation and divorce!

BOURRIENNE. You are mad; such a proceeding would tarnish your glory.

NAPOLEON. My glory! My glory! I don't know what I would not give to know that what Junot has told me is not true, so much do I love that woman! If Josephine is guilty, a divorce must separate us forever—I don't want to be the laughing stock of all the idlers in Paris. I am going to write to my brother Joseph; he will see to the divorce.

BOURRIENNE. I wouldn't. A letter may be intercepted and it would only betray the anger that dictated it. As for divorce, there is time enough for that later, when you shall have reflected. You will, in all probability, soon return to Paris. The last despatches said that your enemies were circulating reports of your death. You said that that was done for the purpose of undermining you politically—

NAPOLEON. Yes, and it was, but I cannot go back yet—Oh, Josephine!—I have yet to make a campaign into Syria, and (*firmly*) I cannot go to Paris now—not even for Josephine! Ah! Josephine! She has taught me to disbelieve in persons. I accepted her affectation of affection as sterling coin. But oh! the folly of man to believe in woman!

BOURRIENNE. You wrong that woman. I have never seen her but all tenderness and love for you. She is naturally conquettish, but that does not mean a wanton philander—necessarily.

NAPOLEON. Ah! There is fire where there is so much smoke.

BOURRIENNE. How did Junot happen to tell you this?

NAPOLEON. I don't know. (*Looking up suddenly*) I believe I asked him.

BOURRIENNE. And he trafficked on your credulity.

NAPOLEON. No! No! He did not.

BOURRIENNE. Yes, he did! You love that woman so madly that you have to be all action—action of some kind—it's your nature. Just now you are a jealous man, that is all!

NAPOLEON. No! She was showing my letters to Murat and somebody else and laughing at them!

BOURRIENNE. I don't believe it!

NAPOLEON. Ah! He quoted them—

BOURRIENNE. Who?

NAPOLEON. Junot—He quoted them exactly! (*fiercely*) Do you think I want to be the laughing stock of the whole army?

BOURRIENNE. (*kindly*) The Little Corporal can never be that!

NAPOLEON. Ah, you don't know! We are all but puppets of fate after all! (*After a few moments with sudden determination*) I'll get back at her!—Where's that Mme. Fourés that they all call "the little general"—that pretty blonde that Eugene and Merlin think so fine?

BOURRIENNE. (*surprised*) But her husband!

NAPOLEON. Who is her husband?

BOURRIENNE. Lieut. Fourés of the 22d Chasseurs.

NAPOLEON. Send for him.

BOURRIENNE. Now?

NAPOLEON. At once!

Exit Bourrienne.

NAPOLEON (*sits and takes pen and paper*)
What's her name, Pauline or Marie? (*Writes*)
I have seen and desired only you. You are fair to me as Cleopatra to the panting Antony. Accept the gifts I send herewith and grace my table at Palace Elifi-Bey tomorrow evening at eight. (*stops writing and muses*) Letters! I'll write such letters to this woman as that false Josephine never dreamed of. I'll give her the blush. (*mournfully*) A camp woman! How little I thought when I held my Josephine in the first flush of my love that so soon the mockery of it all would be known to the world.

[*Enter Lieut. Fourés; he salutes. Bourrienne who is with him retires some little distance.*]

NAPOLEON. (*To Fourés*) The fortunes of war are uncertain. I desire you to take these dispatches with all haste to the Directory at Paris. An armed ship leaves the harbor tonight at eleven.

LIEUT. FOURÉS. My wife—may I take her? She could—

NAPOLEON. No! A soldier has no such privileges. You did well to smuggle her here. Ask no more. Bid her good-bye—(*maliciously*) your faithful wife—until you meet again!

Exit Fourés.

NAPOLEON. (*continuing his letter*) A kind answer alone can requite your adorer. NAPOLEON. (*calls*) Bourrienne! (*hands him letter*) See that this letter, a bouquet of choice flowers—I don't care what—some beautiful trinket—ANY beautiful

trinket—be in the hands of that woman tomorrow morning. Her husband goes tonight.

Exit Bourrienne.

NAPOLEON. Accursed fools we men, and I the greatest simpleton of them all!

CURTAIN

SCENE II

SCENE—*Same as Act I, Scene I, with this exception; a graceful couch takes the place of the table and chairs R. The settle is at back of stage and L. while the table and chairs take its place down L. The time is seventeen months after Napoleon's marriage to Josephine and just after his arrival in Paris at rue Chatereine, Josephine's home.*

Enter Napoleon with Lucien and Joseph.

NAPOLEON. Oh, you have told me enough. Her debts that Joseph tells me of are nothing; they can be paid.

LUCIEN. I don't see what you married her for; you must have known of her relations with Barras.

NAPOLEON. Stop!—I don't give a damn what happened before I married her; if I didn't question her, you need not.

JOSEPH. (*Seeing Lucien is crushed*) Well, since your marriage then! There is no doubt whatever of M. Charles' devotion at Milan.

LUCIEN. Whenever LeClerc was away, he was there and when you had him arrested, she—

NAPOLEON (*Savagely*) What?

JOSEPH. She wrote and procured him a position

here in Paris at Brodin's.

NAPOLEON. What else?

LUCIEN. Murat—she used to show your letters to him and make sport of them and you.

NAPOLEON. So this is the way she carried on for seventeen months while I have been facing death at the cannon's mouth to make her the wife of an emperor!

LUCIEN. Hush!

JOSEPH. Be careful!

NAPOLEON. I thought of her as suffering—

LUCIEN. Yes, while you thought her ill, she was attending every fete and opera of moment in Paris.

NAPOLEON. I thought to get a wife who would aid me socially—a wife of the old regime. I thought to carve out a name and future on the battlefield—

Enter Duroc.

NAPOLEON. Ah, Duroc, you see me in my weakness.

Voices of mob outside shouting Napoleon's name.

NAPOLEON. I return after seventeen months to find my wife not at home to welcome me! But I'll divorce her!

DUROC. Yes.—Do you hear those acclamations in the street?

NAPOLEON. Yes.—Dear to me as was the sound of Josephine's voice!

DUROC. Yes. They do not expect a scandal. Do your duty to your country before you dismiss your wife. To advertise your domestic trials is to lay yourself open to ridicule and THAT in France—in France RIDICULE is DEATH—Where is she?

NAPOLEON. Guilty—she dares not look upon my face! Gone!

DUROC. Yes—gone to meet you by the road over which you were announced to arrive; gone to meet you, man! You took the Bourbonnais route, and she, poor woman, missed you!

NAPOLEON. Yes, missed me! I wish I missed her!

DUROC. Yes! (*with vehemence*) What kind of friends or (*looking sharply at Napoleon's brothers*) relatives have you anyway!

LUCIEN (*to Joseph*) She will appear before him with all her fascinations, explain matters, he'll forgive all—

NAPOLEON. What's that you say? I forgive? Forgive! Never! Never! (*striding up and down*) You know me. Were I not sure of my resolution, I would pluck out this heart and cast it into the fire.

Exeunt Lucien and Duroc. Enter Josephine, Hortense and Eugene.

JOSEPHINE. (*extending her arms to Napoleon*) Napoleon!

NAPOLEON. (*waving her off*) Madame, it is my wish that you retire immediately from this house. Retire immediately to Malmaison.

HORTENSE. (*as her mother falls weeping and exhausted on Eugene's shoulder*) She has been traveling steadily for three days trying to catch up with you. How can you be so cruel!

Exeunt Eugene, Hortense and Josephine.

NAPOLEON. (*looking after Josephine*) The doors of my heart are closed to you forever! (*to Joseph*) Tell Eugene to come here at once!

Enter Eugene.

NAPOLEON. I want to speak to you. It is too late for you to go tonight to Malmaison. She can stay here—but not with me; tell her so! As for you, you will never suffer for your mother's misdeeds. I shall keep you always with me.

EUGENE. No; you wont! When my mother is cast out, I am—on principal.

NAPOLEON. Well spoken. I remember the day I gave you back your father's sword. (*drops his head on Eugene's shoulder*) Oh, Josephine!

Exeunt Napoleon and Eugene in tender embrace.

[*Stage dark. Josephine comes in and mounts the staircase, sobbing aloud as she goes.*]

JOSEPHINE (*shaking door at top of stairs*) Open, Napoleon, open! Oh! my husband! Open!

NAPOLEON (*from within*) That door shall never be opened to you again!

[*Josephine remains sobbing at the door. Hortense and Eugene enter and climb the stair-case to her.*]

JOSEPHINE. What shall I do? I never realized my love for him until I fear the losing of it! What is now left to me, my children?

HORTENSE. (*shaking door*) How can you be so cruel as to refuse to see her after your long absence! At least, give her a chance to give her side of the story!

EUGENE. You will surely kill her if you do not see her!

[*Hortense and Eugene lead her down and she lies on the couch, Hortense and Eugene kneeling beside her. Suddenly the door at the head of the stairs opens and Napoleon appears with candle. He comes*

down to the landing and calls "Josephine."]

NAPOLEON. (*Advancing further down and putting light on table*) Josephine!

JOSEPHINE. (*springing up*) Napoleon! Let me explain! Children, leave us!

Exeunt Hortense and Eugene.

NAPOLEON. Ah! but can you explain? Can you explain the frequent calls of Blondin?

JOSEPHINE. I can show you his letters offering marriage to my daughter, Hortense! He cultivated me that I might give my sanction.

NAPOLEON. (*Shaking his head*) M. Charles?—

JOSEPHINE. A purely platonic friend—

NAPOLEON. (*Shaking his head*) No.

JOSEPHINE. I have nothing but my word, Bonaparte.

NAPOLEON. I take it! (*steps to door*) Eugene!

Enter Eugene.

NAPOLEON. I thought you'd not be far off! (*turns and takes Josephine in his arms*) You (*to Josephine*)—you have conquered; I love you too much to repudiate you. Reproaches are senseless. If you were not very dear and necessary to me, I **WOULD NOT TAKE YOU BACK!** (*to Eugene who has been looking on amazed*) Send Lucien and Bourrienne to me at once. I have something very important to say to both.

Exit Eugene.

[*Josephine sobs quietly in Napoleon's arms.*]

Enter Bourrienne.

NAPOLEON. When I left Africa, I ordered Mme. Fourés to follow me to Paris on the next armed boat. She arrives tomorrow in the "America." I forbid her to set foot in France. You un-

derstand.

JOSEPHINE. Oh! Bonaparte!

NAPOLEON. Furnish her with all the money she wants. Any arrangement you make will be satisfactory to me and **MUST** be so to her. That is all!

Exit Bourrienne, meeting Lucien coming in.

NAPOLEON. (*sternly to Lucien*) Josephine and I are reconciled. Her explanations are sufficient. She has my entire confidence. **YOU UNDERSTAND!**

Exit Lucien.

[*Napoleon takes candle and mounts steps to his room; Josephine follows weeping.*]

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE—*Room in a palace at Mantua, Italy, 1807. See Scene Plot.*

Enter the Emperor Napoleon and Lucien.

NAPOLEON. Well, sir, I have sent for you to ascertain if you still hold to Madame Joubberthon and her son?

LUCIEN. Mme. Joubberthon is my wife, and her son is my son!

NAPOLEON. No; no! since it is a marriage which I do not recognize and, consequently, null.

LUCIEN. I contracted it lawfully, as a citizen and as a Christian.

NAPOLEON. The civil act is illegal, and it is known that you gave a priest twenty-five louis-d'or to persuade him to marry you.

LUCIEN. Doubtless Your Majesty, when he invited me here, did not do so for the purpose of paining me; if that is his intention, I withdraw.

NAPOLEON. I have conquered Europe, and certainly I should not flinch before you. You owe your peaceful life in Rome to my kindness, but, through the prestige of my name, you are acquiring a consideration there which displeases me, and in time you will annoy me. I will order you to go away, and I will make you leave Europe.

LUCIEN. And if I should not obey?

NAPOLEON. I will have you arrested.

LUCIEN. And then—

NAPOLEON. I shall have you sent to Bicêtre and

then if—

LUCIEN. I should defy you to commit a crime.

NAPOLEON. Don't speak to me that way; don't imagine you can impose upon me! I repeat it, I have not conquered Europe to flinch before my Brother Lucien! Leave the room!

LUCIEN. (*paying no attention to the command*) I had no intention of displeasing your majesty by saying that which should show my high opinion of the greatness of his soul.

NAPOLEON. Never mind my soul! Cast your eyes on the map of the world, and then join us, Lucien, and take your share. It will be a fine one, I promise you. The throne of Portugal is empty. I have declared that the king shall cease to reign. I will give it to you. Take command of the army destined to make an easy conquest of it and I will make you a French prince and my lieutenant. The daughters of your first wife shall be my nieces; I will establish them in life. I will marry the eldest to the Prince of the Asturias. The King of Spain asks it as a favor.

LUCIEN. My eldest daughter, Sire, is not yet thirteen; she is not old enough to be married.

NAPOLEON. I thought she was older.

LUCIEN. In a year or two I shall gladly let you dispose of her as you see fit.

NAPOLEON. Then there are difficulties about the children of your first wife and you have daughters by your second wife. I will adopt them. You have a son by her, too; I shall not recognize him; his mother shall have an important principality and he can be her heir. As for YOU, go to Lisbon; leave your wife and son in Rome and I will look

after them. Your ties are broken; I will find the way.

LUCIEN. That can only be by divorce.

NAPOLEON. And why not? That is a frank and positive way of stating it and perfectly suits me. I want to be reconciled to you and you know the price attached to the Portuguese crown!

LUCIEN. I see that to get it, I should have to consent to make my wife a concubine, my son a bastard. Your Majesty knows me ill if he has been able to believe that the offer of a crown could tempt me to a dishonorable action.

NAPOLEON. He who is not with me is against me; if you do not enter into my system, you are my enemy, and thereby I have the right to persecute you, and I will persecute you.

LUCIEN. I do not want you to be my enemy, Sire; I cannot become one to you by preserving my honor and my virtue, by refusing to give up my reputation for a throne, and that this disagreement may be unknown, let your majesty give me some spectacular proof of his kindness. Give me the broad ribbon of the Legion of Honor.

NAPOLEON. No; by taking my colors you would ruin your reputation. It is a great thing to be opposed to me. It is a fine part to play. You can continue it for two years, and then you will have to leave Europe.

LUCIEN. I shall be prepared to leave much sooner. I should have gone long since to America had it not been for the entreaties of my mother and Josephine.

NAPOLEON. I do not ask that of you. My propositions are not too unreasonable to be thought

over. Ponder them with your wife. Jerome yielded to me—gave up his wife and see him NOW! Monarch of the Kingdom of Westphalia.

LUCIEN. Yes; Jerome yielded to you, but Lucien is made of different metal!

NAPOLEON. (*angrily*) I am the Emperor!

LUCIEN. Emperor or not! I want you to distinctly understand that I prefer my simple, homely wife—"the soap-maker's daughter," as you choose to call her, to all the wealth, all the honors, all the kingdoms of the world!

NAPOLEON. Go!

Exit Lucien; Napoleon paces up and down like a caged lion.

Enter Josephine weeping.

NAPOLEON. Why are you crying, Josephine? It is absurd. I have created your son Vice-Roy of Italy, and now you cry because you are separated from him. If the absence of your children gives you so much pain, judge what I must suffer. The affection you show them makes me feel the more acutely my unhappiness in having none.

JOSEPHINE. Oh, Bonaparte, don't.

NAPOLEON. Besides, I have real troubles—not imaginary ones! I have just quarreled with Lucien, and ordered him from my sight.

JOSEPHINE. Why?

NAPOLEON. Because that wife of his is inappropriate and inadmissible. I want him to marry—

JOSEPHINE. Let him love or marry whom he chooses. Let him have that right of all.—She appears to be a worthy woman and he loves her. Let him alone.

NAPOLEON. You are very kind to plead for

HIM—It is very hard to find in one's family opposition to such great interests. I shall have to isolate myself from everyone and to depend upon myself alone. Well, I shall suffice for myself and you, my good Josephine, will console me for everything. (*confidentially*) I have married my brother Louis to your daughter Hortense and their son shall be ours BY ADOPTION.

Here is the edict. (*Takes from an inner pocket a folded paper with red seal and ribbon*) "The French people desire the inheritance of the imperial dignity in the direct, natural or adoptive line of descent from Napoleon Bonaparte—as is determined by the organic senatus consultum of the 28th Floral Year XII."

JOSEPHINE. Ah, Bonaparte, you have been so good to us all. Your blood and mine you make to mount the throne of kings! But this last—adopting my daughter Hortense's child—why! the young Napoleon, when you and I shall have passed away, will be Emperor of France! And you have done this—my husband!

Enter Louis, Mme. Murat and Stephanie de Beauharnais.

NAPOLEON. Well, Louis? I read opposition in every line of your face! What now?

LOUIS. I have just learned that you reserve for yourself the right of adoption, and that you choose to adopt my child as your own!

NAPOLEON. Yes.

MME. MURAT. Why condemn me and my sisters to obscurity, to contempt, while covering strangers with honors and dignity!

NAPOLEON. My DEAR sister Caroline, judg-

ing from your pretentions, one would suppose that I had inherited this throne from the late king, your father, and that I were trying to cheat you out of it. Kindly reflect that were it not for me you would still be plain Caroline Bonaparte, not even the wife of Gen. Murat.

[*Mme. Murat goes R. to where Stephanie has seated herself unostentatiously on a small chair and takes her by the arm roughly.*]

MME. MURAT. Get up; it is not proper for anyone to remain seated in the presence of the family of the emperor. (*The girl rises and weeps softly with chagrin.*)

Louis. But why must I resign to my SON a part of your succession? Why do I deserve to be disinherited? What will be my condition when this child, having become yours, shall find himself in a position superior to mine, independent of me, holding the place next to you, and eyeing me with uneasiness, or possibly even with contempt? No; I shall never consent to it; and rather than consent to bow my head before my son, I shall leave France and take the young Napoleon with me, and then we shall see, if, in the face of the world, you will dare to take a child from his father.

NAPOLEON. Louis, you certainly ARE self-sacrificing and disinterested! You are a model father for all time!

Enter Joseph.

NAPOLEON. Joseph! He has some complaint. Ye gods! What a harmonious household! If our poor Corsican father could see us now! Joseph!

JOSEPH. (*thunders*) Yes!

NAPOLEON (*before Joseph can say another word*)

Consider the origin of the Bonaparte family! For God's sake do you be a prince and don't disturb yourself about the transmission of the title! What are you crying for, Stephanie? Any pins in that chair? Or are Caroline's remarks as barbed as usual? Come and sit on my knee and you wont incommode "the sister of an Emperor!" (*Dances her on his knee.*)

CURTAIN

ACT IV

SCENE I

SCENE—*Room in Fontainebleau, 1809. Doors C. in back flat and L. I E. Up stage and L. C. a grand piano with bench for players; also harp nearby. Louis XIV chairs here and there and large potted plants. R. on dais with red rug two high backed chairs with Napoleon's medallion on leather backs. Fire-place with mantle R.*

[*The doors are thrown wide open and a lackey announces: The EMPRESS JOSEPHINE and HORTENSE, QUEEN OF HOLLAND and Ladies. Josephine mounts the dais and sits; Hortense is motioned to take her place beside her mother and on her right.*]

JOSEPHINE. (*to the lady of the three ladies-in-waiting next to her*) Duchess, I want to talk privately with my daughter. You and my ladies may have the morning to drive in the park. (*Ladies bow profoundly and retire, lackeys opening the doors for them but only half way, as the doors are only opened to their full extent for Napoleon or Josephine.*)

HORTENSE. The most desirable of all blessings is repose, seclusion, a little spot we can call our own. You and I, mother, cannot but see that a court satisfies no one and yet prevents one from being satisfied anywhere else.

JOSEPHINE. Yes, Hortense, often I think that a court is a country where the joys are visible but

false, and the sorrows, hidden but nevertheless real. Never does Providence show more clearly the nothingness of this world's grandeur and magnificence than in the study of our own court life. It is sure to teach wisdom and indifference to human glories.

HORTENSE. Why do you speak thus, mother? It sounds almost like a prophecy of ill. Why are you so sad these days? Is it not enough for me to mourn the loss of my boy?

JOSEPHINE. Ah! Hortense, that boy is a double loss. Since his death, Napoleon is not the same to me. I have a feeling in my heart that all is not well. For nine years now I have held sway over his heart and I know every movement—I have studied him—he can hide nothing from me and—something awful is coming to me!

[*Announced: Fouché, Minister of Police; Corvisart, Court Physician. Josephine and Hortense rise and the latter goes over to the piano and plays some soft, sad chords until summoned by the Empress later on in the scene.*]

JOSEPHINE. Ah, Fouché; Doctor! (*to lackeys*) Chairs!—You may be seated!

FOUCHÉ (*bowing*) Your Majesty is gracious!

DOCTOR (*bowing*) Most Serene Highness! (*sits.*)

[*Announced: The Emperor. Enter Napoleon with a few gentlemen. Josephine, Fouché and Corvisart all rise.*]

NAPOLEON. Ah, Fouché; (*looking playfully at the Empress*) I believe thou art the wickedest fellow in my dominions!

FOUCHÉ. (*bowing profoundly*) For a subject, Sire, I really think I am!

NAPOLEON. Good, Fouché; your wit is ever polished.

FOUCHÉ. Your Royal Highness, I thank you.

NAPOLEON. (*to Corvisart*) How now, Doctor, what have you to say for yourself? Tell me now, my good doctor, how many men have you sent into the other world?

DOCTOR. Not nearly so many as has your majesty, but with infinitely less glory!

NAPOLEON. Ah, I see, my good doctor, that you have other weapons than the dissecting knife, and ONE that grows keener with constant use. (*Entertainingly*) I asked the doctor once to play a quiet game of cards with me, and the old rogue told me he knew not the difference between a knave and a King!

ALL. Ha! Ha! Ha!

NAPOLEON. Come, Doctor, I desire your presence just now!

Exit Emperor and followers.

JOSEPHINE (*sitting*) Now, your business, please, Fouché!

FOUCHÉ. As a minister, charged with general supervision, I am here to bring to your majesty's mind a certain fact. In the eyes of the Council, for the public good—above all, for the strengthening of the existing dynasty, it is required that the Emperor should have children. We think, Your Highness, that you ought to ask the Senate to join with you in demanding of the Emperor a sacrifice most painful to his heart!

JOSEPHINE (*with remarkable coolness*) Stop! Do you take this step by the Emperor's orders?

FOUCHÉ. No! As a minister charged with a

general supervision, as a private citizen and one devoted to his highness' glory.

JOSEPHINE. In that case, I have nothing to say to you. I regard my union with the Emperor as written in the Book of Fate. I shall never discuss this matter with anyone but him. I will never do anything but by his orders.

[*Announced: M. Grétry, the Composer.*]

JOSEPHINE. (*to Fouché*) You are dismissed. (*He hands her a folded paper*) What is this?

FOUCHÉ. (*bowing profoundly*) Reading matter for Your Highness!

Exit Fouché.

JOSEPHINE. Grétry—now that I have you to myself—you may be seated—I want to—strange thing to do—I want to apologize for my husband's forgetfulness which must be painful to you. The Emperor is not good at remembering names and he seems to have particular difficulty in remembering yours, but, believe me, he is not so forgetful of your contribution to the world of music.

[*Re-enter the Emperor coming back to go out Door C. Grétry and Josephine rise and bow.*]

NAPOLEON. (*to Grétry*) Let me see! What is it you call yourself, pray?

GRÉTRY (*bowing but amused immeasurably*) Your Highness, I am STILL Grétry.

NAPOLEON. Yes, that is the name! Your presence, please.

Exit Grétry in train of Emperor.

JOSEPHINE. (*left to herself reads paper given her by Fouché*) Hortense! Hortense!—What shall I do to ward off this storm? The Minister of Police—try to be calm—herein urges the spon-

taneous sacrifice of my love. "The more painful the more meritorious," he says.

HORTENSE. Mother, my advice is to go this very moment to the Emperor.

JOSEPHINE. But is it not clear that Fouché was sent by the Emperor and that my fate is sealed? Alas! To leave the throne is nothing to me. Who knows better than I how many tears I have shed there! But to lose at the same time the man to whom I have given my best love—this sacrifice is beyond my strength.

HORTENSE. It may not be so bad. Go to him, mother. Remember you must seem to have consulted no one. Make him read this letter. Watch him closely—show him that you hate such round-about methods; tell him such an order should come only from him. Wait—wait—until he has retired—then go to him.

JOSEPHINE. Ah, my daughter, I told you of his restraint in manner, of the anxious looks of my attendants and his. He has had the masons wall up the door between our apartments! Ah! If you knew in what torments I have passed the last few weeks in which I was no longer his wife, although compelled to appear before the world as such! The agony and suspense. In what uncertainty, what expectancy, more cruel than death, I have lived and am still living, awaiting the lightening stroke that has long glowed in Napoleon's eyes!

HORTENSE. Ah, mother, your cause is lost!

JOSEPHINE. I know it, my daughter! I know it!

Lackey opens door center and Napoleon enters unannounced.

JOSEPHINE. The hour has come!—May Hortense remain?

NAPOLEON. (*to Hortense*) Go. (*to Josephine*) No!

Exit Hortense weeping.

NAPOLEON. (*trembling and shuddering takes Josephine's hand and presses it close to his heart, and after gazing sometime at Josephine*) Josephine, my dear Josephine, you know how I have loved you. I have been wont to say it was to war I owed my glory and my power. Without it I would have been nothing; by it, I was everything. I love war both by instinct and calculation but to you—to you alone, I owe the only moments of pure happiness I have tasted in this world. But, Josephine, my destiny is not to be controlled by my will. Friendship is only a name, and men must be firm in heart and purpose or they should have nothing to do with war or government. (*Puts both hands on her shoulders*) Josephine, my destiny is not to be controlled by my will. (*Lets her stand alone unsupported*) My dearest affections must yield to the interests of France!

JOSEPHINE. Say no more! I understand you! I expected this, but the blow is nonetheless mortal.

She falls face downward.

JOSEPHINE. You will not do it! You do not wish to kill me!

NAPOLEON. (*Who has taken candle from mantle over fire-place, standing in Door C. looking sadly at her*) In the interests of France and for my dynasty. (*exit*)

CURTAIN

N. B. If a curtain call is given, Corvisart, The Court Physician, and Hortense will be leaning tenderly over the Empress.

SCENE II

SCENE—Room in Fontainebleau, one day later. Large Center Door at back of stage, fire-place R. and somewhat down stage; Davenport R. On raised dais L. square table with high backed chair (for Napoleon) so placed that when he sits on same the audience can see his face well; smaller arm-chair for Josephine opposite this.

Discover Regnault de Saint-Jean d'Angély talking before fire-place.

REGNAULT. (to Arnault, the Poet, standing beside him) True, Josephine is vastly admired by the French people. Whatever her previous errors, since she has been allied to him, her devotion has been unquestionable. All the fibres of her loving heart have entwined themselves about him.

ARNAULT. Why don't you men who are closest to the Emperor tell him all this?

REGNAULT. We have done so—many of us. We have urged upon him that an alliance with a member of some old dynasty like that of Austria might be contrary to the Republican spirit of the people, but how can a man tell the truth to himself when the press is muzzled and public power rests only on his general approval; when there is no slave even to remind the triumphant hero, as in ancient times, that he is only a man! How is it possible to avoid being infatuated with one's own greatness and not to imagine oneself the absolute master of

one's destiny?

ARNAULT. True, that man is an exceptional being; everything succumbs to his superior genius, to the force of his character, everything about him shows the stamp of authority. The man is born to command as so many others, to obey. I once heard the Prefect of Arras say "God created Bonaparte and then he rested!"

REGNAULT. God would have done better had he rested a little sooner—ere He made him ambitious of empire!

ARNAULT. Yes; but if I am anything of a prophet, if Napoleon Bonaparte is not lucky enough to be carried off by a bullet within four years, he will be in exile! Hush! Careful!

NAPOLEON (*Enters with arms folded; crosses over to the fire-place and looks into it, then turns his back to the blaze and with head dropped meditatively*) It is an unhappy necessity that compels me to separate from her. I pity her from the depths of my heart. (*Seeing Arnault and Regnault*) Ascertain for me if Eugene has yet arrived from Italy.

Enter Eugene.

REGNAULT. Even now, Your Majesty.

EUGENE (*taking Napoleon's hand*) Your Excellence, is it true that you have decided to obtain a divorce from the Empress, my mother? (*No answer save a pressure of the hand*) Then (*drops Napoleon's hand*) Sire, in THAT case, permit me to withdraw from your service.

NAPOLEON. How! Will you, Eugene, my adopted son, leave me?

EUGENE. Yes, Sire, (*firmly*) the son of her who is no longer an Empress cannot remain vice-

roy of Italy. I will follow my mother into her retreat. Her only consolation now must be in her children.

NAPOLEON. (*in a mournful tone*) Eugene, you know the stern necessity which compels this measure, and will you forsake me? Who, then, should I have a son, the object of my desires and preserver of my interests, who would watch over the child when I am absent? If I die, who will prove to him a father? Who will bring him up? Who is to make a man of him?

EUGENE. (*taking his hand*) My benefactor—my more than father! It is my mother's command—even now—that I give you boundless obedience.

NAPOLEON. Matchless Josephine! Unique and unparalleled in history shall she be. I give her more than money, palaces, titles; I give her my sympathy and my tears. (*With sudden resolution*) Let us have it over. Arnault and Regnault, summon them from the next room—I am ready for the preliminaries! Come! (*goes over to his chair and Eugene with folded arms takes his place beside him. Regnault stands behind chair intended for Josephine.*)

[*Enter Caroline and Gen. Murat, Stephanie, Ladies-in-Waiting, Louis, Junot, Bourrienne, Joseph, Fouché, Corvisart, etc., etc. Napoleon sits dazed. Nothing is said.*]

[*Enter Empress Josephine, pale but self-possessed, on the arm of Hortense, who is weeping bitterly. Josephine advances gracefully to seat assigned to her; Regnault takes his place on her left and Hortense on her right. Napoleon rises, she bows to him and he waves her to be seated.*]

NAPOLEON (*In a hard metallic voice, reads from paper taken from table*) "The political interests of my monarchy, the wishes of my people, which have constantly guided my actions, require that I should transmit to an heir, inheriting my love for the people, the throne on which Providence has placed me. For many years I have lost all hopes of having children by my beloved spouse, the Empress Josephine, and it is this consideration which induces me to sacrifice the sweetest affections of my heart, to consult only the good of my subjects, and to desire the dissolution of my marriage. Arrived at the age of forty years, I may indulge a reasonable hope of living long enough to rear, in the spirit of my own thoughts and disposition, the children with whom it may please God to bless me. God knows what such a determination has cost my heart; but there is no sacrifice which is above my courage when it is proved to be for the interests of France. Far from having any cause of complaint, I have nothing to say but in praise of the attachment and tenderness of my beloved spouse. She has embellished fifteen years of my life, and the remembrance of them will be forever engraven on my heart. She was crowned by my hand. She shall retain always the rank and title of Empress. Above all, let her never doubt my feelings, or regard me but as her best and dearest friend."

JOSEPHINE. (*rises and with paper in hand falters*) By the permission of my august and dearly beloved spouse, I am here to say that I respond to all the sentiments of the Emperor in consenting to the dissolution of a marriage which, henceforth, is an obstacle to the happiness of France, by depriving

it of the blessing of being one day governed by the descendants of that great man who was evidently raised up by Providence to efface the evils of a great revolution, and to restore the altar, and the throne and social order. (*dropping down into seat, she hands the paper to Regnault that he may read the remainder.*)

REGNAULT (*while Josephine sits with head in hand of arm resting on table—everyone weeping more or less apparently*) "But his marriage will in no respect change the sentiments of my heart. The Emperor will ever find in me his best friend. I know what this act, commanded by policy and exalted interests, has cost his heart, and we both glory in the sacrifices we make for the good of the country! I feel elevated in giving the greatest proof of attachment and devotion that was ever given upon earth.

[*Napoleon rises and goes around the table and takes Josephine's hand (she has risen); then he takes her in his arms for a brief space of time until Hortense takes her to lead her out. Eugene attempts to follow but faints on threshold crying "Mother, Mother!"*]

CURTAIN

[*Curtain rises immediately to find stage clear save for Napoleon who stands dejectedly with arms folded and head held meditatively and with back to fire-place. At length he crosses to couch and sits there staring blankly.*

Enter Josephine in dressing gown. She hesitates and then totters toward him.]

JOSEPHINE. My husband! My husband! (*flings herself into his arms and lavishes on him the tenderest caresses. Both weep.*)

NAPOLEON. (*seeing Constant who has followed and remained in door*) Go outside, Constant. (*Sits on couch with Josephine and lets her sob*) Come, my good Josephine, (*rises*) be more reasonable. Come, courage, courage! I shall look out for you and your children. I shall come to see you often—very often, but—I respect the wife too much to make her the mistress. You must go, my good Josephine! Constant! Constant!

Enter Constant who leads Josephine out. Napoleon throws himself on couch.

Re-enter Constant.

NAPOLEON. Take away the lights. (*In the darkness as he throws himself wearily down*) I feel as if my star had gone out! I won battles, but Josephine conquered hearts!

CURTAIN

ACT V

SCENE—*Josephine's boudoir at Malmaison in May 1814. Large door R. C. Grand Piano, bench for same, harp R. toward back of stage. Writing desk suitable for lady L. C. and large potted plants with bust of Napoleon gleaming from pedestal. Down stage R. small table with small chair on either side. Settle down stage left.*

[*Discover Josephine sitting at her desk and Hortense playing softly on piano. Josephine takes some letters from desk and comes down stage and sits on settle reading and musing alternately.*]

JOSEPHINE. Four years have passed since that day—three since the birth of that boy. (*Picks up one of the letters and reads*) "This infant in concert without Eugene will constitute my happiness and that of France." Ah! Bonaparte, you were most amiable! Could anything be better calculated to soothe whatever might be painful in my thoughts when the cannon were booming and the bells ringing that announced to the world that Napoleon's sacrifice of his wife to an inordinate ambition had not been in vain. Surely the morning when I first saw Napoleon enter this room, leading the young Napoleon by the hand, was certainly the happiest of my life, for it effaced, for a time, the recollection of all that had preceded it, for never have I received from him a more touching mark of affection and respect. Ah! that fatal campaign in Russia. For two hours we sat here and I begged him not to attempt it—not to tempt the gods too much. That

was our last interview but one. He rose and kissed my hand and left me asking me to wish him good luck! And then he returned—this time a fugitive, and, as he stood there, "Josephine," he said, "I have been as fortunate as ever man on the face of this earth. But in this hour of defeat, when a storm is gathering over my head, I have not, in this wide world, anyone but you in whom I can safely confide." And yes! "My marriage to Maria Louisa," he said, "was a pit covered with roses!" (*She lifts a miniature of Napoleon from her bosom and kisses it tearfully*) Hortense! Hortense! (*When Hortense comes and sits beside her*) Read to me from Napoleon's last letter from Bienne—that particular passage at the end!

HORTENSE. (*takes the bundle of letters from the settle beside Josephine and reads*) This is the letter you mean. "On beholding those scenes where I had first passed my boyhood, and comparing my peaceful condition then with the agitation and terrors which I now experience, I several times said, in my own mind, I have sought to meet death in many conflicts; I can no longer fear it. To me death would now be a blessing. But I would once more see my Josephine."

JOSEPHINE. (*much affected*) Ah! Bonaparte! You are not ungrateful!

[*Enter page ushering a courier. Josephine takes letter and hands it to Hortense with the request "Open it, Hortense!" She then takes both the hands of the courier in her own and a moment later she takes a valuable ring from her finger and gives it to him as a reward for bringing her letter safely. Then she takes the letter from Hortense and wav-*

ing the courier to be seated at a table R. she reads the letter with much emotion.] "Fontainebleau, April 16, 1814. Dear Josephine,—I wrote to you on the 8th of the month, but perhaps you have not received my letter. Hostilities still continued, and possibly it may have been intercepted. At present, the communication must be re-established. I have formed my resolution. I have no doubt that this letter will reach you. I will not repeat what I said to you—Then I lamented my situation; now I congratulate myself upon it. My head and spirit are free from an enormous weight. My fall is great, but it may, as men say, prove useful. In my retreat I shall substitute the pen for the sword. The history of my reign will be curious. The world has yet seen me only in profile. I shall show myself in full. How many things have I to disclose! How many are the men of whom a false estimate is entertained! I have heaped benefits upon millions of wretches. What have they done in the end for me! They have all betrayed me—yes all. I except from this number the good Eugene, so worthy of you and me. Adieu! my dear Josephine. Be resigned as I am, and never forget him who never forgot and never will forget you. Farewell, Josephine, Napoleon. P. S. I expect to hear from you at Elba. I am not well." Hortense! I must not remain here!

HORTENSE. Why not, mother?

JOSEPHINE. My presence is necessary to the Emperor.

HORTENSE. That is his wife's duty. Maria Louise! Remember!

JOSEPHINE. The duty is indeed his wife's—

more Maria Louisa's than mine, but the Emperor is alone—forsaken! I, at least, will not abandon him. I might be dispensed with while he was happy; now I am sure he expects me. (*turning to courier*) You will remain here until intelligence be received from the allied sovereigns. They will respect her who was the wife of Napoleon.

[*Doors thrown wide open and Emperor Alexander of Russia announced. Josephine and Hortense kneel. He lifts them gracefully to their feet. Exit Courier.*]

ALEXANDER. You are safe. My guard will protect you. Let me tell you that I have loved Napoleon so dearly that even the position of hostility which policy compels me to assume cannot banish from my heart friendship for the hero who so long ruled Europe. Madame, I burned with the desire of beholding you. Since I entered France, I have never heard your name pronounced but with benedictions. In the cottage and in the palace, I have collected accounts of your angelic goodness, and I do myself a pleasure in thus presenting to your majesty the universal homage of which I am the bearer.

JOSEPHINE. I thank Your Majesty. Sire, I have always desired the happiness of France. I did all in my power to contribute to it; and I can say with truth that the first wife of Napoleon never caused a single tear to flow!

Sound of herald announcing something not yet distinguishable.

JOSEPHINE. What is that herald saying? What is that herald saying!

Announced: THE EMPRESS MARIA

*LOUISA DECLINES TO FOLLOW THE
EMPEROR, NAPOLEON THE GREAT, IN-
TO EXILE!*

ALEXANDER. And she had permission of the allies to accompany him!

HORTENSE. Oh, God! Wonderful are thy ways!

ALEXANDER. (*to Josephine who is swaying*)
Madam, you are ill!

JOSEPHINE. (*with hand on heart*) Yes, Sire,
I am bleeding here! (*she falls*) Isle of Elba!
Napoleon! Maria Louisa!

CURTAIN



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